

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated March 26, 2003. Claims 1-4, 41 and 54-58 are presented for examination. Claim 51 has been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and that claim will not be mentioned further. Claims 1-4 have been amended to define more clearly what Applicants regard as their invention. Claims 54-58 have been added to provide Applicants with a more complete scope of protection. Claims 5-40, 42-50, 52 and 53 have been withdrawn from consideration. Of the claims under consideration, Claims 1, 41 and 58 are in independent form. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Applicants note with appreciation the withdrawal of the election-of-species requirement, although they do not concede that the indicated Species are not patentably distinct.

In response to the objection to the drawing, a corrected version of Figure 1 is submitted herewith.

Applicants appreciate the care taken to ensure non-duplication of references listed on the patent, but respectfully point out that the form PTO-1449 on November 13, 2002, was not in fact a complete duplicate of the one submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement of October 29, 2002, but was submitted to correct a typographical error in the latter (please note the attached copies of those two forms PTO-1449). Accordingly, a new copy of the corrected form PTO-1449 is submitted herewith, and it is requested that the relevant entry be initialed and returned, in lieu of the incorrect one; alternatively, correct printing of any patent that may issue from this application can be

assured by the document in question (Japanese Kokai 11-070378) being listed on a form PTO-892.

Claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter, and Claims 1-4 and 41 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite.

The claims have been carefully reviewed and amended as deemed necessary to ensure that they conform fully to the requirements of Section 101 and of Section 112, second paragraph, with special attention to the points raised in paragraphs 8 and 10 of the Office Action. It is believed that these rejections have been obviated, and their withdrawal is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4 and 41 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from U.S. Patent 6,272,472 B1 (Danneels et al.).

As is described more extensively in the present application, toner and other consumable office supplies are manufactured and used on a very large scale. Because some portions of these products (for particular example, the containers in which toner is supplied) are themselves made of recyclable materials, it is desirable for a user to be able to return the container after the toner has been used up. Such returns, however, are typically conducted when the occasion arises, which sometimes involves an inefficient use of both the user's and the manufacturer's (or dealer's) resources. The present invention is intended to provide a more efficient way for a user to return such recyclables.

For example, independent Claim 1 is directed to a processing method related to return of a used product, which is carried out by an information processing apparatus

capable of sending information to a terminal via a communication network. According to the method of Claim 1, there is sent information for displaying, which contains fields for ordering a product and for specifying the return of a used product by user of the terminal.

By virtue of this feature, the presence of the mentioned fields encourages a user who is interested in buying more of a consumed product, also to return the used product. This promotes return of used products, and thus helps protect the environment.

Danneels relates to a system in which supplier websites are dynamically linked to websites of actual or potential resellers of the requested product. Applicants submit, however, that nothing has been found, or pointed out, in *Danneels* that would teach or suggest generation or transmission of information for displaying, where that information contains fields for ordering a product and for specifying return of a used product, or status information related to return of a used product being sent to a user's terminal. Even if that patent is deemed to show the sending of information to cause a display including a field for ordering a product, nothing in that patent even hits at the other field recited in Claim 1. For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that Claim 1 is allowable over *Danneels*.

Independent Claim 41 is directed to a processing method related to return of a used product, which is carried out by an information processing apparatus capable of sending information to a terminal via a communication network. The method of Claim 41 includes receiving logged-in information from the terminal, and reading status information related to the return of a used product from a database in accordance with the logged-in information. There is supplied information for displaying, which contains ordering

information of a product, to the terminal, and there also is supplied to the terminal information for displaying, which contains the read status information.

Claim 41 is believed also to be allowable over *Danneels* for reasons similar to those advanced above in regard to Claim 1.

Independent Claim 58 is directed to a processing method related to return of a used product, which is carried out using an information processing apparatus capable of sending information to a terminal via a communication network. The method of Claim 58 includes receiving logged-in information from the terminal, and reading result information relating to the return of a used product from a database in accordance with the logged-in information. Claim 58 recites that the result information is generated based on the return of two times and more. In addition, there is supplied to the terminal information for displaying, which contains the read result information.

Again, Claim 58 is believed to be clearly allowable over *Danneels* for at least the same reasons as is Claim 1.

A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicants' opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as a reference against the independent claims herein. These claims are therefore believed patentable over the art of record.

The other claims under consideration in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an

additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration or reconsideration, as the case may be, of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


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